

A full
A C C O U N T

Of the late *Ship-wreck* of the Ship called

The PRESIDENT:

Which was cast away in *Montz-Bay* in *Cornwal*
 On the 4th of *February* last,

As it was deliver'd to HIS MAJESTY,
 (both in Writing and Discourse)

By *William Smith* and *John Harshfield*, the only Persons
 that escaped in the said *Wreck*.

TOGETHER,

With all the remarkable Adventures in the said
 Voyage from their Sailing out of the *Sound* of
Plimouth, on *May-Day*, 1682.

PARTICULARLY

Their Engagement with *Six Pirate-Ships* at once on
 the Coast of *Malabar*.

The whole Relation

Being taken in private Conference with the said *William Smith*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Randal Taylor*, near STATIONERS
 Hall, 1684.

ACCOUNT

Of the loss of the ship called

THE BRITANNIA

which was lost in a gale in Cornwall

As it was related to HIS MAJESTY,

(by Sir John and Sir Thomas)

By William Smith and John Huxford, the only Persons
that escaped in the said Wreck.

TOGETHER

With all the remarkable Adventures in the said
Voyage, from their sailing out of the Sound of
Orkney, on the 1st day, 1792.

PARTICULARLY

the Engagement with six French Ships on the 20th
the Capture of the French.

The

Part taken in driving the said French Ships

TO THE

Printed for

1792

 AN ACCOUNT

Of the loss of the Ship called

The PRESIDENT:

Together with all the

Remarkable Adventures of her Voyage, &c.

SUCH is the Method of humane Affairs, that the greatest Hopes of Advantage are attended with the greatest Hazard and uncertainty. Of this we have a remarkable Instance in the late miserable Wreck of the Ship called *the PRESIDENT*; fitted out at the great charge of the Company for her Voyage to the *East-Indies*; and with no small expectation of her advantageous Return. If we consider the extremities to which the Persons on Board her were reduced, before they utterly perish'd, together with their gallant behaviour in a most desperate Engagement, we shall scarce find Examples of either. This Account has been expected, but could not before be fully gathered, by reason the two Persons who onely escaped, were so sick and disabled, that it was six weeks before they came up to give the Particulars to his Majesty.

On the first day of *May*, 1682. the *President* (Burthen five hundred and fifty Tun or upwards, Captain *Jonathan Hide* Commander) sailed out of *Plimouth Sound* in Company with the *Suratt-Merchant*. But as soon as she was off the *Canary Islands* she lost Company with her. About three Months after the Captain found it necessary to refresh his Men, and accordingly touched at the Island call'd *Mauritius*. This is a Place of Parrots, and where Venison is in such plenty, that they surprized and killed several Deer as they lay asleep. Their continuance here was about a fortnight.

On the 28th of *December*, they fell in with the Coast of *India*, and touched at *Car-war* a Factory of the *English*. From hence they weighed after four days stay, and proceeded in their Voyage, having hitherto met with no considerable Adventure.

But on the 15th of *January* following, on the Coast of *Malabar*, they met with six Sail of Ships, whom at first they took to be Friends. These Vessels they afterwards understood to be Man'd chiefly with *Arabians*, who had revolted from their King and entred themselves into the Service of *Savage*, a certain Prince in those parts, who is in continual War with the great *Mogull*. Or rather they were a Nest of Renegadoes there gotten together from all parts, and so desperate as seldom to give or take Quarter. Our Men however not having the least apprehension of Danger from them, stood with them, expecting some News from *Suratt*. But it seems these *Barbarians* had heard of such a rich Ship upon the Coast, and so came up with their six Sail, with great numbers of Men, resolv'd to carry her or sink by her side. As soon therefore as they came within shot they fired their Broadsides; The surprize amongst our People was very great, expecting no such Complement, nor having so much as clear'd their Decks, or cut down the Hammocks, The Enemy taking all Advantage of their unreadiness, immediately fell to Grappling and laying them on Board. However, by encouragement and example of their Captain, they with chearful shouts betook themselves to their Work. The Encounter on both sides was with utmost Fierceness and Resolution: though with vast odds and Advantage on their part. Our Men therefore were very hard set till they had got out their lower Tire of Guns, which did them extraordinary Service, for with them they sunk two of the Enemies Ships by their side. The rest were so far from being discouraged hereby, that they pour'd in their Numbers with more Fury; Their Assault was so fierce that our Men were driven into their Fore-castle, the Enemy possessing himself of the Steerage. The Savages made no doubt but they should presently be absolute Masters of the Prize. Our Captain therefore betook himself to his last Relief, which was to throw his Granadoes out amongst the Enemy. The *Barbarians* at first stood staring upon them (having never seen any such Things before) till the Balls broke

broke amongst them with so great surprize and Slaughter that our Decks were immediately clear'd of their new Guests. You were they so resolute (after a small respite) as to lay Aboard once more. Till by a chance shot from our Vessel that carry'd the Wadd along with it into one of their Ship's Powder-Room, the said Ship immediately blew up: Being foremost in the Service and so near the President as to set her Sails on Fire. Upon this Discouragement (two of their Ships having been sunk before) the remainder made off with so much haste that they left most of their Men who had boarded us, to shift for themselves: Part whereof were glad to get into the Long-boat of the *President* and make away in her as fast as they could. Before our Ship was quite clear of them, the Fire that had taken hold of her Sails grew dangerous. Whereupon *William Smith* (who afterwards escaped in the *Wreck*) first adventur'd up to the Main-Yard, to extinguish the Flame, receiving a Wound with an Arrow in his Leg, but the Pile was smooth and happened not to be poison'd. The behaviour of the Captain in this desperate Service was with all possible Conduct and Courage. And indeed the performance of every Individual Person was so extraordinary as must render the Fate that afterwards befel them more deplorable: So that we must needs say of them (as *Cicero* did of *Roscius* after recital of his Merits) *Videbantur plane mori non debuisse*. Notwithstanding the Encounter was so sharp, yet the *President* lost but thirty Men, and the Enemy no less than five hundred. The great *Mogull* from whom these Savages had revolted, hearing of the Dispute that had past, immediately sent on Board the *President* for a particular account of the Fight, with which he was extremely well satisfied, and sent the Captain a Present of extraordinary rich Silks.

The next Day they bore up for *Goa*, a chief City of the *Portugueses* where they lay to refresh their wounded Men: and in less than a fortnight after they arrived at *Saran*. Here they met with an unfortunate Accident, for as the Gunner was clearing of a whole Culverin the Gun split in pieces by which he was killed, together with the Armourer and two common Seamen: several others being disabled.

About the latter end of *April* they weigh'd from *India*, being in company with the *Persia-Merchant*, and in four months

time arrived again at *Mauritius*. Where they met with the *Suratt-Merchant* their outwards-bound Consort. But the Season not permitting them to proceed in their Voyage, by reason of the Trade-Wind, which at that time of the year is always contrary off the *Cape bon Esperance*, they continu'd on the Island full three months. On the beginning of *December* following they lost sight of the *Suratt-Merchant*, supposing her to be afterwards-cast away at *St. Michael's* on the Western Islands.

From this time as they drew nearer home, they met with extraordinary rough Weather; yet they judged themselves within three days Sail of *England* when with violence of Tempests (the Wind blowing continually at North-East) they were driven out again to Sea, their Provision being almost spent and their Men very faint and sick. What Port soever they attempted to make, whether *Ireland* or *Portugal*, the Wind was still in their Teeth.

In this Distress they continu'd for eleven Weeks together; their Allowance being no more than one pound of Biscake a Week for each Man, and a piece of Beef of about three pound for twenty Men. Their Beef they ate raw being loth to waste any part of it in Boiling; at last they had but one Dog left aboard, which they kill'd, boiling the Head and purtenance for Broth, and of the rest they made a delicate Banquet.

They call'd to a *Jamaica* Ship as she pass'd them, who durst not trust her Men aboard them with Relief, for fear they should not return, she having no more than were necessary for her Voyage. They met likewise with a *French Merchant-Ship*, from whom they had some Stockfish, but were little the better for it, because they could get from her neither Oil nor Water. And indeed in this want consisted their greatest extremity, which was so much more tormenting as Thirst is more violent than Hunger. They were reduced to a Pint a day for each Man, and that of Rain-water gathered as it ran down their Ropes, from which it was tainted with so bitter a Taste, that they were scarce able to drink it. From this drought their sickness encreased so much, that at last there were not above fourteen of the fourscore Persons on Board, who were able to do business in the Ship. It is impossible to draw the Scene of Misery to the Life, to see the poor Wretches, at such time as any Rain fell, some wringing of

of the Sails; some sucking at the Ropes as it trickled down; and others too sick and feeble to do either; but laid gasping on their backs, with their Mouths open to receive the little Refreshment as it rain'd in.

After all this Distress it was their hard fortune to lose their Ship in *Montz-Bay* in *Cornwall* on the ninth of *February* last. After she had struck, she sat not an hour before she was beat in a thousand Pieces. Nor indeed could it be otherwise by reason of her falling on the Rock as she did, with her side to the Sea.

Of the fourscore Persons, not one escaped beside the fore-said *William Smith* and *John Harshfield*.

This *Harshfield* they hapned to take up in the *Indies*, he having been twice Wreck'd before in his Voyage thither; the last time was in the *Johanna*, very few Persons escaping with him: These were his Companions over the Desert Country from *Cape de Gullis* to *Cape bon Esperance*, Twenty and one days Journey, in which they were reduced to the extremity of eating Grass. Yet was it his fortune to be once more cast away, and what was more wonderful to be one of the Two that onely escaped.

These two Persons sate on the fore-part of the Ship while the hinder-parts were broken, seeing most of their Companions drowned, before they quitted their Station. *Smith* at length was forced off on part of the Bow-Sprit, to which were fastened by Rings several Ropes wherewith he enfolded himself to prevent his being washed off by the Sea.

Harshfield followed him on a Plank, his Father being on Board and calling to him to take him on, which for fear of being incumbred he dared not to do. As he floated he was overtaken by a Third Person who thinking him better provided, quitted his own Plank and laid hold on *Harshfield's* Breeches. *Harshfield* finding himself endanger'd thereby, immediately loosed his Hose, letting him and his Breeches together into the Sea.

After this he made a shift to recover *Smith*; who (being better mounted) hal'd him up to him, and gave him part of the Ropes to fasten himself withal: without which it had been impossible for them to have lived in so rough a Sea. By these most difficult means they made a shift at last to get to the side of a Rock at the Lands End, where they likewise

found a Third Person arrived. With much ado they climb'd up about the height of Two Stories, the Precipice above them being so steep that they could ascend no higher; they had now been no less than fourteen Hours in the Sea, yet were still so much expos'd to the violence of the Waves, that the foresaid third Person was wash'd off again and drown'd: *Smith* and *Harshfield* very hardly preserving themselves by wedging each other into an hollow of the Rock. As soon as the Tide was out they descended with no small danger to the Sands; but as they were crossing over to some place that was accessible they were inhumanely set upon by two Country Fellows, who perceiving that they had been Shipwreck'd, and supposing them to have saved about them something that was of most Value, attempted to knock them on the Head, Which they had certainly effected on these defenceless Wretches but for a Gentleman (*Steward* to *Mr. Godolphin*) who was then riding over the Sands and came up to their Relief. Thereupon seeing him approach they fled, but were since taken and thrown into a Goal.

On the Sunday immediately following, in Sermon-Time, the People of the next Town first heard of the Wreck, whereupon with one consent they ran out from their Devotion to the Spoil, leaving the Parson to Preach to the bare Walls.

The Company sent down several Persons to recover what they could; which was scarce enough to pay for their Journey. The Vessel nevertheless was of very rich Lading, being modestly judg'd of no less than an hundred thousand pound Freight, of the Companies; beside what belong'd to private Persons, with much Jewish Treasure of Pearl, and Diamonds.

The said *Smith* and *Harshfield* having receiv'd Commendation of His Majesty, are now prefer'd by the Company, and sent out again to Sea.

F I N I S.